

D. Cultural Resources

There are two distinct kinds of cultural resources: (1) "Cultural Properties" which are physical locations that can be identified by the presence of artifacts or other material evidence such as archaeological or historical objects, structures, buildings, and features; and (2) "Traditional Lifeway Values", which are a social group's shared beliefs and practices regarding ways that the land and land features contribute to the group's sense of well-being or identity. Examples of this latter category include a mountain peak considered sacred, plants used ceremonially or important trails used by Native Americans.

Cultural properties are identifiable through field inventory, historic documentation, or oral evidence. They may include definite locations of traditional cultural or religious importance to specified social or cultural groups. Cultural properties are identified, classified, ranked, and managed through the system of inventory, evaluation, planning, protection, and utilization as described in the BLM 8100 Cultural Resource Management Manual.

These cultural properties, including both prehistoric and historic remains, represent a part of the continuum of events from the earliest evidences of humans through the historic through the historic period. In the geographic region encompassing the CPNA, documented human presence of the region extends from the Paleo-Indian Period (circa 11,000 - 9,000 B.C.), through the historic period (beginning in A.D. 1769) and up to the recent historic past (50 years of age or greater).

Highly sensitive and significant cultural areas of the CPNA consist of prehistoric and historic archaeological sites found dispersed along its southwestern margin. They are of interest to researchers and recreationists because of cultural and natural resource values. Painted Rock, although heavily vandalized, is considered one of the most important Native American pictograph sites in California. Other archaeological resources associated with habitational, occupational, and ceremonial uses of the CPNA attest to the importance of this region to Native Americans. Many of these sites, being relatively unknown and inaccessible, have remained undisturbed while other sites were damaged by cultivation, vandalism and other human activities while in private ownership.

Many sites are known locally but few have received identification on local, state, or national registers. Three sites have been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) but none have been submitted for formal nomination. These sites include components of the Washburn and Selby historic ranch facilities and the Painted Rock site. Many prehistoric and historic sites may exist, yet have not been formally identified, recorded or evaluated.

The BLM has records of nearly 50 archaeological or historical sites dispersed across the landscape within and adjacent to the CPNA. Based on federal law, these records and locational information remain confidential for the protection of sensitive materials, but the information is available for valid research projects.

Prehistoric site types encountered in the CPNA include, lithic flake scatters, limited-use areas, temporary and extended-stay camps, house and possibly seasonal village sites, pictograph and petroglyph locales, bedrock mortars/milling slicks, lithic material quarries, plant processing locales and other manifestations of prehistoric occupation. The site types and their distribution patterns display evidence of seasonal and possibly year-long occupation for several thousand years by various

cultural groups. Indigenous groups appear to have been specialized towards a valley interior-upland food subsistence base, with hunting and gathering being the dominate subsistence pattern.

Evidence of the Paleo-Indian Period (circa 11,000 - 9,000 B.C.) can be found nearby at Tulare Lake, Buena Vista Lake, and in the Tehachapi Mountains. The Pleistocene shoreline and high terraces of old Soda Lake offer a high potential for the discovery of Paleo-Indian sites on the CPNA.

Several sites of the Archaic Period (circa 9,000 - 2,000 B.C.) are found as manifest by remains located on the Elkhorn Plain, Temblor and Caliente Range foothills, and the Panorama Hills. The Post-Pleistocene shoreline and mid-terraces of old Soda Lake are expected to contain additional Archaic Period sites.

Examples of sites from the late prehistoric Pacific Period (circa 2,000 B.C. to A.D. 1769) are found in the foothills of the Caliente and Temblor Range. Possibly habitational sites are present at various locations in the Caliente's.

Historic Period (A.D. 1769 to present) sites are found throughout the area. Historic properties include artifacts, features, buildings, and structures representative of the Spanish Colonial, Mexican Republic, California Republic, and United States eras. Important sites include a petroglyph believed to be a Spanish Crest carved on a sandstone boulder at Painted Rock (possibly Spanish Colonial), Mexican Republic and California Republic Period sheep and cattle camps, and many American Period ranches of the mid-to-late 1800s. The Saucito, American, Kern County Land Company, Selby, Goodwin, Washburn, and Painted Rock ranches are good examples of the ranching operations.

The CPNA appears to have been an interface zone between 3 major tribal groups, the Chumash, the Salinan and the Yokuts. There are no present day communities of Native Americans living on the CPNA. However, many Native American groups such as the Chumash and Southern Valley Yokuts continue to use certain areas for traditional cultural uses such as ceremonies, plant collection, and vision quests.

The greatest danger to cultural resource sites is from individuals who illegally collect artifacts, dig or otherwise damage them. Protective efforts include patrol and monitoring by rangers, archaeologists and volunteers, posting signs, installing fences, closing roads, and site protection programs by concerned individuals and groups. Scientific research to collect data which may be lost by natural forces or human acts of vandalism and theft is a way to protect or save important information which is being threatened.



Security and protection of the Painted Rock site complex was initiated when the land was acquired. The north-south road to Painted Rock was closed, a fence was installed and grazing was discontinued to protect sites within the Painted Rock pasture. The road to the eastern side (Selby Road) of the Painted Rock pasture was rerouted to avoid any further impact to cultural resources which were in the confines of the original road bed. The Painted Rock Trail and vehicle parking area, now located less than 3/4 mile from Painted Rock, were constructed to provide further protection by allowing controlled or limited access to the site. Painted Rock is formally monitored monthly to identify any problems or impacts. It is also closed to the public during the summer solstice to allow Native American use. Public access is restricted to guided tours from March through July 15 to protect sensitive cultural and wildlife resources. A cultural monitoring and patrol strategy is currently being developed.

Education and interpretative programs are a viable method of protecting cultural resources. The California Native American Heritage Commission has provided funding for the development of the Painted Rock interpretive trail sign. Partnerships and volunteer efforts with the Native Americans are other potential means to enhance the protection program.

One primary method to protect significant cultural properties is enforcement of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The act is implemented when any proposed action may impact cultural resources and leads to completion of field and record search inventories and property assessments. Decisions are made in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Native American groups and the Carrizo Advisory Council, and interested public parties as appropriate.

Wildfire suppression tactics have the potential to impact cultural resources (see the Biotic Communities Habitat Management - Fire section). Measures designed to minimize or eliminate these potential impacts have been identified in the resource protection strategy map (Technical Appendix).

